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Contact: Gordon Helm
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**NOAA/LOUISIANA DNR AWARD THREE CONTRACTS
TOTALING \$632,000 TO PLANT MARSH AND DUNE VEGETATION
ON BARRIER ISLANDS**

Three contracts have been awarded to two local companies to install nearly 140,000 native dune and marsh plants on three key barrier islands along Louisiana's coast. The awards, totaling \$632,000, were announced today by the [Louisiana Department of Natural Resources](#) and [NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service](#). The planted vegetation will reduce erosion on 600 acres, increasing the life span of East Timbalier Island, Grand Terre Island and the Chandeleur Islands.

Black Lake Marsh, Inc. of Lake Charles, La. will install plants on East Timbalier Island and Grand Terre Island while Bertucci Contracting Corporation of Jefferson, La. will plant the Chandeleur Islands. The Chandeleur Island vegetative planting project will install marsh vegetation, while the East Timbalier Island project will focus on dune vegetation. The Grand Terre Island project is a mix of both marsh and dune vegetation and also includes black mangrove plants.

"Vegetative planting is a low-cost approach from our restoration toolbox that will stabilize the islands and create new habitat for fish and shore birds," said Dr. Bill Hogarth, acting director of NOAA Fisheries. These projects are another milestone in our continuing Breaux Act partnership with the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources to restore coastal wetlands and help safeguard the interests of fishermen, hunters and conservationists."

"Barrier islands are our first line of defense against hurricanes and damaging coastal storms," said Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Secretary Jack Caldwell. "Native vegetation will trap sediment and sands and is the final step in stabilizing East Timbalier Island."

The \$81,000 East Timbalier Island project is located in Lafourche Parish and is part of a barrier island chain that fronts Terrebonne and Timbalier Bay. DNR and [NOAA](#) rebuilt a large portion of the island in 1999-2000 by dredging 2.6 million cubic yards of sediment to create 220 acres of new marsh and dune habitat. Last fall, an extensive network of sand-trapping fences was installed through a contract with Coastal Environments, Inc. of Baton Rouge.

The plantings on Grand Terre Island in Jefferson Parish will re-vegetate over 100 acres with a variety of both marsh and dune plant species to protect the island from erosion. The \$162,000 contract will include installing 600 mangrove plants along sensitive areas of the islands bay shoreline.

The Chandeleur Islands are a 22 mile-long barrier island chain located in easternmost St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes. The islands are bounded by the Gulf of Mexico to the north, south and east, and by Chandeleur and Breton sounds to the west.

In 1998, [Hurricane Georges](#) passed within five miles of the islands and created more than 100 washover channels through the barrier chain, dramatically increasing rates of shoreline retreat. By planting over 80,000 plants in strategic locations, the \$389,000 project will stabilize the islands, trap sediments and accelerate marsh expansion. Information from a pilot project conducted last year was used to improve the final project design and help ensure success in this dynamic environment.

The projects are funded under the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act ([Breaux Act](#)). It is notable that the Chandeleur planting project is the first Breaux Act project to achieve construction under the new cash-flow process, only one year after Task Force authorization. The goal of this process is to build high potential restoration projects faster.

Enacted in 1990, the Breaux Act provides funds for protecting, restoring and preserving threatened coastal wetlands, primarily in Louisiana. Currently, through their Breaux Act partnership, NOAA Fisheries and Louisiana DNR are implementing large- and small-scale restoration projects benefitting more than 150,000 acres with approximately \$80 million in project funding.

More information on the projects is available on the NOAA Restoration Center home page, <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/cwppra/>, or on the Breaux Act home page at <http://www.lacoast.gov>.